Reagan Misses 3 Sessions Of C.I.A. Spying Inquiry

2-6-75

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5—Former California Gov. Ronald Reagan, who has missed three of the four weekly meeting of the presidential commission investigating the Central Intelligence Agency, reportedly told Presidennt Ford when he was asked to join the panel that his speaking engagements might conflict with the meetings.

According to Mr. Reagan's secretary in his Los Angeles office, President Ford told the California Republican that this "would not present a problem," presumably on the basis that Mr. Reagan could catch up by reading the transcripts of the missed sessions, which already total hundreds of pages.

Mr. Reagan, one of eight men appointed by Mr. Ford to a special commission to look into allegations of illegal domestic activities by the C.I.A., was present for the opening meeting and left before the day-long session ended.

Dillon Absent Once

The only other member to miss any of the commission's meetings, according to its public-affairs director, was former Treasury Secretary C. Douglas Dillon, who was not present for last Monday's meeting. Vice President Rockefeller, the panel's chairman, was asked about Mr. Reagan's absenteeism after last Monday's meeting. He said that he expected Mr. Reagan to be present for the Feb. 17 meeting, and added: "He'll have a lot of reading to do. According to the commission staff, Mr. Reagan has not yet visited the commission headquarters, where the hundreds of pages of transcripts are kept in locked files.

The commission meets on Mondays, in a conference room in the Vice President's suite of offices in the Old Executive Office Building, next door to the White House. The meetings have followed a pattern of starting at 10.30 A.M. and continuing, with a break for lunch sent in to the conference room, until 4.30 P.M. or later. Seven witnesses, all present or former top C.I.A. officials, have testified thus far, some more than once.

Mr. Reagan could not be reached for direct comment today. He has a daily three-minute radio show, writes a newspaper column and maintains a strenuous speaking schedule. During January, according to his secretary, he gave seven "major addresses" to such groups as the International Safari Club, in Las Vegas and the Public Forum in Richmond.

Mr. Reagan, a conservative Republican who was barred by law from seeking a third term as Governor last year, has 11 major speaking engagements scheduled for February, according to his secretary, and a like number for March.

Philip W. Buchen, counsel to the President and one of those involved in the formation of the commission, said in response to an inquiry today that he could not say what Mr. Ford and Mr. Reagan had discussed in private conversations, but added, "I did understand that at one point that the duration [of Mr. Reagan's service on a commission] might be affected, that the Governor had a very heavy schedule a little later on."

He said it could be coincidental that the timing of the commission's meetings turned "no problem" into a conflict with Mr. Reagan's speaking engagements.

The commission's members receive a consultant's fee of $138.48 for each day of meetings, as well as travel expenses and a per diem allowance. The commission, set up at the beginning of January, was supposed to complete its work within 90 days. Mr. Rockefeller, asked yesterday about the widely rumored possibility that more time might be needed, replied.

"We'll do our best and if we find that there are areas that we are not satisfied with, we might have to then seek permission from the President ... for some slight additional time'.

It is believed that only a short extension would be needed, possibly an additional month.

Focus of Investigation

The commission is expected to concentrate on the question of whether or not the C.I.A. violated specific aws, rather than attempting to discover how much illegal activity took place. Congressional investigations, likely to be getting under way as the commission finishes its work, would pursue details of various offenses.